

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 AF-10 DRC-01 /155 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1665

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

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TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: PAKISTAN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS: LULL IN DOMESTIC
POLITICS

REF: ISLAMABAD 8783

SUMMARY: RELATIVE CALM PREVAILS ON NATIONAL POLITICAL
SCENE DURING TWO-MONTH BREAK BETWEEN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
SESSIONS. ONLY WALI KHAN AMONG OPPOSITION LEADERS
HAS CONTINUED ACTIVE POLITICKING DURING RAMAZAN.
GUJRAT BY-ELECTION, EASILY WON BY GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE,
MAJOR EXCEPTION TO OTHERWISE QUIESCENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL
PICTURE. ASSEMBLY WILL MEET AGAIN ABOUT MID-NOVEMBER.
END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE SEPTEMBER 5-14 SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
RELATIVE CALM HAS PREVAILED ON USUALLY TURBULENT
DOMESTIC SCENE, FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY SEPTEMBER 26
DECISION OF JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI TO ESCHEW EXTRA-CONSTITUTIONAL
POLITICAL TACTICS (REFTEL). GOVERNMENT LEADERS APPEAR
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PREOCCUPIED WITH ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHILE BHUTTO AND

HIS CHIEF FOREIGN POLICY ADVISERS, CURRENTLY ON VISITS TO IRAN, TURKEY AND SAUDI ARABIA, ARE FOLLOWING MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY. NOTWITHSTANDING GOVERNMENTAL FOCUS ON NON-POLITICAL SUBJECTS, SEVERAL MINISTERS (NOTABLY QAIYUM AND MIAZI) HAVE FOUND TIME TO TAKE AN OCCASIONAL DIG AT WALI KHAN. FOR THEIR PART, OPPOSITION LEADERS EXCEPTING WALI KHAN AND ASGHAR KHAN APPEAR TO HAVE DECIDED TO FOREGO POLITICS AT LEAST DURING MONTH OF RAMAZAN. WALI HAS BEEN MAKING NUMBER OF VITRIOLIC SPEECHES, BUT ONLY IN NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE. HIS SPEECHES HAVE BEEN BLACKED OUT IN ALL BUT HANDFUL OF NEWSPAPERS. ASGHAR PLANNED UNDERTAKE FRONTIER TOUR, BUT MOST RECENTLY HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL JOURNEY TO CAIRO TO ADD HIS ASSISTANCE TO ARAB EFFORTS AGAINST ISRAEL.

2. BALUCHISTAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO TALK OF POSSIBILITIES OF COMPROMISE WITH CURRENT OUTS OF NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY. REPORTS ALSO CONTINUING OF OCCASIONAL MEETINGS BETWEEN GOP AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND ARRESTED NAP BALUCH FIGURES. HOWEVER, NO RESOLUTION TO POLITICAL DEADLOCK OR TO ARMED CONFLICT IN BALUCHISTAN HAS SURFACED.

3. GUJRAT (PUNJAB) BY-ELECTION OCTOBER 12, BITTERLY CONTESTED BETWEEN PEOPLES' PARTY AND UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT, ONE MAJOR EXCEPTION TO CURRENT LYLL. BY-ELECTION (REPORTED LAHORE 1307), HANDILY WON BY PPP CANDIDATE, WAS SECOND SIGNIFICANT ELECTION IN 1973. (JUNE BY-ELECTION IN NORTH WEST FRONTIER WON BY NAP IN CLOSE CONTEST.) GUJRAT ELECTION SEEN BY SOME IN CAPITAL AS STRUGGLE PRIMARILY BETWEEN TWO LOCAL POLITICAL MAGNATES - PAKISTAN PRESIDENT FAZAL ELAHI OF PPP AND MNA ZAHUR ELAHI OF COUNCIL LEAGUE, AMONG MOST BELLIGERENT OF OPPOSITION FIGURES AND TARGET OF GOOD DEAL CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HARASSMENT DURING PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. PPP BY-ELECTION RECORD IN PUNJAB REMAINS UNBLEMISHED.

4. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND SENATE NOW SCHEDULED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECONVENE FOR WINTER SESSION ABOUT MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER. ACCORDING TO LAW AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER, ASSEMBLY WILL RECEIVE BILL TO PERMIT APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES IN NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES TO ASSIST VARIOUS MINISTERS. REQUIREMENT THAT GOVERNORS MUST NOT HOLD ANY ELECTIVE POSITION AFTER NOVEMBER 13 PLUS CREATION OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY POSITIONS MIGHT SET OFF ANOTHER SCRAMBLE FOR OFFICE

WITHIN PPP. UNCLEAR AT THIS TIME WHETHER PPP PLANS HOLD
ANOTHER NATIONAL CONVENTION THIS WINTER SIMILAR TO
THAT HELD LAST YEAR IN RAWALPINDI.

5. UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT LEADERS, ASIDE FROM UNSUCCESSFUL
EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF UDF CANDIDATE IN GUJRAT, HAVE BEEN
UNUSUALLY QUIET. UDF HAS NOT YET INDICATED PUBLICLY
WHETHER ITS MEMBERS WILL ATTEND NEXT ASSEMBLY SESSION
OR OPT TO CONTINUE BOYCOTT BEGUN LAST MEETING OVER
ARREST OF BALUCH LEADERS. JAMAAT'S DISAGREEMENT OVER
TACTICS WITH OTHER FRONT MEMBERS SPELLS SOME STORMY
DAYS AHEAD FOR CONTINUED OPPOSITION UNITY.SOBER

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